A Tale of Leaves

On Sanskrit Manuscripts in Tibet, their Past and their Future

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Amsterdam, 2004

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ISBN 90-6984-409-5

The paper in this publication meets the requirements of ∞ iso-norm 9706 (1994) for permanence.

Eleventh Gonda lecture, held on 21 November 2003 on the premises of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences

On having been greatly honoured by the invitation to deliver the Gonda Lecture 2003, the most prestigious invitation to be received by a Sanskrit scholar at the present time, I was strongly reminded of the Taoist knowledge that to become one with time and change one needs to learn how to abandon all conduct and all sense of being an independent and autonomous agent.

That said, I would like to thank the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Gonda Foundation for this invitation, and particularly my colleague Pieter Verhagen for the good sense to propose the present topic among his alternatives. I cannot imagine what made him ask for it, since he could not possibly have known that, indeed, this was the right moment. A *kṣaṇa*, the Buddhist would say, the right and therefore auspicious moment. A year ago, I would not have chosen to talk about these matters in public. But now, the time seems to be ripe.

I wonder, however, whether you and Pieter Verhagen will be very happy with my lecture. For it will and cannot be a lecture up to ordinary scholarly expectations. Rather, what I can offer, will be a story and a vision. A story of the past, ancient as well as recent, and a vision for the medium and long-term future. Yet, even as a narrative, my story can neither attempt to be comprehensive nor to be fully satisfying. The narrator's frame of view has always been limited, some of the information acquired concerning the more recent period still needs to be double-checked, and thus many questions crowding one's mind will have to remain unanswered for the time being. Moreover, and strangely enough, these Sanskrit manuscripts are probably one of the very last cultural treasures on earth that can be classified as a 'sensitive issue'. 'Sensitive' in the sense that danger of different sorts is felt to be involved by those who may be held responsible for anything related to this material. And also 'sensitive' in the sense that any progress to be achieved in the development of their accessibility must be considered as a carefully deliberated step-by-step undertaking. To respect this specific circumstance I cannot and will not reveal the sources of some of the knowledge acquired over the years, and I will not identify a number of persons who have been helpful along the way. All in all, this lecture will only be a first attempt to put some cornerstones of the more recent developments in place in order to demonstrate the necessity of remembering this period. Eventually, when better and broader information from all sides is available, these stones will be moved to their right places and the present gaps of knowledge will be filled, thus provid-

ing a more complete edifice of information about the recent fate of these manuscripts.

In order to appropriately highlight the historical importance of the recent developments I will first give a rough sketch of the mostly well-known history of these materials up to the first half of the twentieth century, when Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana in the thirties, and Giuseppe Tucci in the thirties and forties made their discoveries. Next I will relate what I know about their fate after World War II up to now. Finally I will inform you of the most recent developments and would also like to present some ideas on what eventually should be the lines of further activities for providing their academic accessibility.

* * *

When Buddhism first came to Tibet in the 7th to 9th centuries,[1] it was no longer a tradition with a primarily oral culture of transmission. Authoritative scriptures had long been developed into various canons, and writing and copying had become part of Buddhist life soon after the beginning of our era. The sacredness of the numerous Buddhas' words had expressed itself ritually in the Mahāyāna 'Cult of the Book'. Dogmatic, philosophical, poetic, narrative, didactic, apologetic literatures were composed and transmitted. In short: the written text and its main carrier, the manuscript, had become indispensable. When the great Buddhist universities were founded by, for example, the late Gupta and early Pāla kings after the fifth century A.D., libraries and scriptoria were an essential part of these establishments. Hui-li, in his biography of the famous Chinese pilgrim Hiuan-tsang, reports that the latter, when he left India in A.D. 644, brought 520 manuscripts with 657 different texts back to China from Nālandā.[2]

[1] In the first historical part of my lecture I use traditional orthography for Tibetan names and the Wade-Giles system of transcription for Chinese. In the subsequent section regarding the modern period the modern forms of Tibetan names are used together with their sinicized forms for better identification, and Pinyin transcription for Chinese

[2] Cf. Beal [2]1973: 214

The arrival in Tibet of this already broadly developed and diversified Buddhist religious culture is appropriately characterized by the popular myth of how, at the time of lHa-tho-tho-ri gñan-btsan, an ancestor of the first king, a casket fell down from heaven which contained a turquoise stupa and a manuscript with the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra*.[3]

The Tibetan kingdom reached the apex of its power and extension by the end of the 8th century A.D. and the new religion was officially adopted by king Khri-sroṅ lde-btsan (A.D. 755-797) for his people in 779.[4] The first monastery, bSam-yas, was founded in A.D. 775 with the help of the famous Indian scholar Śāntarakṣita who ordained the first Tibetan monks in A.D. 779. Translating the scriptures and scholastic treatises, mainly from Sanskrit, but also from Chinese, was considered to be a major task during this period. The following kings, particularly Khri-gtsug lde-btsan alias Ral-pa-can (A.D. 815-841),[5] continued this policy. The list of works deposited in the palace of lHan-kar (*recte*: lDan dkar and variants of this spelling) in A.D. 824[6] mentions seven hundred and twenty-two texts translated and seven texts under preparation.[7] And these texts had already been subjected to a terminological revision demanded by Khri-sroṅ lde-btsan in an edict of A.D. 795 that was renewed by his successor Khri-lde sroṅ-btsan alias Sad-na-legs in A.D. 814/815.[8]

All these translations were done by teams consisting of Indian, Tibetan and Chinese monastic scholars. For the translations of Sanskrit texts these teams must have been working on the basis of manuscripts brought from the Indian Buddhist realm. What happened to these original materials after they were translated into Tibetan, we can only guess. They were certainly treated carefully and with the highest respect and in all probability safely kept in the royal palaces and the early temples, much in the same way as they were kept in later times. We also do not yet know whether any of these manuscripts survived the downfall of the Tibetan empire towards the middle of the 9th century. The persecution of

[3] On the many versions of this mythic account cf. *dBa' bzhed* 24f

[4] Cf. Tucci 1950: 44-47

[5] Cf. Imaeda 2001

[6] Cf. Yamaguchi 1985

[7] Cf. Lalou 1953

[8] Cf. Panglung 1994. Scherrer-Schaub 2002

Buddhism started already with the last king gLaṅ-dar-ma (A.D. 841-842)[9], and the following destruction of the royal establishments which did not even spare the tombs of the kings must have also affected the monastic and palatial collections of the new Tibetan translations together with their Sanskrit originals. Since the practice of hiding venerated religious objects in times of distress is well-known in Tibet even today, it is, however, possible that a few Sanskrit manuscripts even from the royal period may still be extant.

The so-called "later spread of the doctrine" was initiated by the fervently Buddhist kings of the Western Tibetan kingdom founded in sPu-hraṅs (Purang) towards the middle of the 10th century by sKyid-lde Ñi-ma-mgon, a descendant of the former dynasty.[10] It began with king Ye-śes-'od's (~A.D. 959-1036) strong efforts to re-establish the links to authoritative Buddhist traditions. Young Tibetans were sent to neighbouring Kashmir and its monasteries[11] to learn the language of the holy scriptures, to translate, and to acquire Sanskrit manuscripts to be translated in the new royal realm. Rin-chen bzaṅ-po (A.D. 958-1055), the leading figure of this period, reportedly worked on one hundred and sixty-eight translations.[12] In A.D. 1042, another Indian scholar of renown was invited to Western Tibet, Atiśa (A.D. 994-1054/55) who subsequently went to Central Tibet to continue his missionary work.[13]

At the same time, in Central Tibet, larger landholding families realized the value and the prestigious character of the Buddhist traditions with their civilizing principles and ideals, and began to establish the policy of a "mixed rule of theocratic and lay nobility"[14] which was to determine Tibetan society up to modern times. Monastic centres soon began to develop again: Sa-skya (A.D. 1073) was the first, Tshal followed in 1175, 'Bri-guṅ in 1179, mTshur-phu in 1189. Sa-skya, under its fourth hierarch Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan alias Sa-skya paṇḍita (A.D. 1182-1251), became the first new political centre of Tibet and a major centre of religious activities after Sa-paṇ's peaceful surrender to Mongol and then Yüan dy-

[9] Cf. Imaeda 2001

[10] Cf. Petech 1997 for a survey of the history of this kingdom

[11] Cf. Naudou 1968

[12] Cf. Tucci 1933. Petech 1997: 234f

[13] Cf. Eimer 1974

[14] Cf. Petech 1966: 328

nasty rule after A.D. 1247. Again Tibetans went to India and Nepal, and Indian scholars, monks and practitioners were invited to Tibet. Manuscripts were imported once more and translated in much the same way they had been during the old kingdom.

Clearly the influx of Indian Buddhists and Buddhist material from the 11th century onwards was also substantially enhanced by the fact that Muslim raids swept through Northern India with steadily increasing pressure during this period. The great centres of Buddhist learning as for example in the Pāla realm, were destroyed near the turn to the thirteenth century, and with them their libraries[15]: Odantapura, Vikramaśīla, Somapura, and Jagaddala. Nālandā,[16] founded before the middle of the 5th century, was already a ruin when the Chag lotsāba Chos-rjes-dpal alias Dharmasvāmin (A.D. 1197-1264) studied there under its last teacher Rāhula Śrībhadra in A.D. 1235-36. The libraries[17] had long ago been turned to ashes,[18] and Dharmasvāmin could not take a single manuscript back home.[19] All the manuscripts he brought back to Tibet were acquired in Nepal.[20] Now we have to imagine Indian refugees who went with their most precious treasures, consisting again, I would assume, mainly of manuscripts, to Nepal and even further to Tibet for safety.[21]

A good example is Vibhūticandra (later half of the 12th cent. to second half of

[15] Cf. Dutt 1962: 354-380 and Warder 1980: 502ff

[16] Cf. Dutt 1962: 328-348

[17] Cf. Dutt 1962: 343

[18] In general it cannot be ruled out, or is rather highly probable, that such devastations of Buddhist institutions are also due to increasing pressure from the side of 'Hinduistic' oppositions. There is, e.g., at least one legendary account (cf. Dutt 1962: 343, n.2) which attributes a case of pre-Muslim destruction to 'heretics': the incendiary of the 'Dharmagañja'-district of Nālandā where the three great library buildings were located. For an elaborated version of this legend cf. Tāranātha 96-98. The fire is already mentioned in *dBa' bzhed* 90. Cf. davidson 2002: 75ffx (chapter 3) for some light on the socio-political background of these developments unfavourable to Buddhism in medieval India.

[19] Cf. Roerich 1959: xxii

[20] Cf. Altekar 1959: viiif

[21] Cf. Bandurski 1994: 23-25

the 13th cent. A.D.).[22] Trained at the university of Vikramaśīla before its destruction and having fled to Jagaddala monastery in East-Bengal, he escaped from another Muslim invasion to Bihar and Bengal under Muhammad Khiljī and in the 1190's, together with his teacher Śākyaśrībhadra, went to Nepal, and in 1204 to Tibet. He spent some time on Srin-po-ri and constructed a temple there, and in 1209 accompanied Śākyaśrī to Sa-skya where Śākyaśrī cooperated with the Sa-skya paṇḍita in translating and correcting older translations. 1213 finds them farther west in sPu-hraṅs from where, in 1214, Śākyaśrī returned to Kaschmir and Vibhūticandra to Nepal. In the Kathmandu valley Vibhūti found new teachers and finally became abbot of the Stham Bihar in the Thamel district of



Autograph of Vibhūticandra (*JBORS* 1937)

[22] Cf. STEARNS 1996, Vogel 2002

modern Kathmandu. From Nepal he travelled to Tibet again twice; the last time he stayed for three years, mostly in Diṅ-ri.

Studies, education, and translations seem to have filled his life. But in his youth he also functioned as a scribe. We know of some folios of a *Kālacakratantra,* and of a *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* and a *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra* manuscript written in his hand.[23] Interestingly enough, the *Kālacakratantra* folios and the *Pramāṇavārttika* manuscript were photographed by Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana in Źa-lu (i.e. in Źa-lu Ri-phug, the hermitage-like retreat behind Źa-lu on the mountain), whereas he found the *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra* manuscript in Sa-skya. Źa-lu had close connection with the Sa-skya-pa under its secular ruler Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan after 1306, and the retreat was founded by the famous compiler of the Tibetan canons Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub soon after 1320 with the erection of "a



Źa-lu Ri-phug (foto Michael Henss 1993).

[23] Cf. Bandurski 1994: note 49.

great temple along with a foundation for the Community."[24] In addition to becoming a centre of yogic practices such as trance running and the generation of inner heat, it was also a centre of translating and working with Sanskrit manuscripts. These manuscripts must have been brought mainly from Sa-skya and remained in Źa-lu when not returned.

The *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra* manuscript was evidently not photographed by Rāhula in Sa-skya, but it is still there. When I visited Sa-skya in 1999, I was shown, in all pathetic innocence, a manuscript said to have been written "in Sa-skya paṇḍita's own hand". In fact it was the very manuscript written by Vibhūticandra. Important is the fact that it is, together with the Źa-lu manuscript of the *Pramāṇavārttikavṛttti,* one of the few Sanskrit manuscripts written on paper, probably Nepalese paper. Since scribes in India still used palm-leaves as material at this time, it is a good guess that Vibhūticandra wrote this manuscript on paper in Tibet, because the marginal notes he left on the manuscript of the *Vṛtti* were definitely written during his sojourn there.[25]

To summarize: The period from roughly the end of the tenth to the fourteenth centuries saw an intensive and comprehensive acculturation in Tibet of all Buddhist traditions available, mainly from India. In fact, and the Tibetan Buddhists seemed to have been aware of their task: a new home for Buddhism was being provided as it visibly disappeared more and more quickly from the face of the holy land. This process of acculturation was realized in many ways: by receiving oral transmissions, by translating texts, by analysing and interpreting their contents, in short, by transforming the whole religious and scholarly culture of Indian Buddhism into the new Tibetan garb. A single glance at one of the modern editions of the Tibetan canonical collections of the *bKa'-'gyur* and the *bsTan-'gyur* should suffice to give an idea of the huge amount of effort which had been devoted to this task.

The large mass of translated literatures may be already remarkable in itself, but the really impressive fact lies in the amazing capacity of most of the scholars involved to come to grips linguistically and conceptually with Indian grammatical, poetical, epistemological and logical literatures of considerable difficulty. True enough, they mostly worked in close cooperation with Indian pandits and

[24] Cf. RUEGG 1966: 97

[25] Cf. SĀṄKṚTYĀYANA 1937: 11-14, STEARNS 1996: notes 29, 31

learned monks. But some of them were also able to work on their own, e.g. the dPaṅ lotsāba Blo-gros brtan-pa[26] who, at the beginning of the 14th century, translated Jinendrabuddhi's *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā* without the help of an Indian pandit. And, what is even more, most of these quite difficult translations are exceptionally well-done and accurate.

When these collections of Tibetan translations were compiled by the monks of sNar-thaṅ, and then edited by Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (A.D. 1290-1364) at Źa-lu in the first half of the 14th century to form what can be called the first Vulgate edition of the Tibetan canon, the need of a more widely spread knowledge of Sanskrit was no longer so pressing. Sanskrit learning, with all its reputation, by the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries slowly became a matter for specialists among the learned, for scholars with a penchant for philological problems, for original sources, for authenticity, and for language and, in particular, for grammar.[27] Primarily, and quite naturally so, this interest was stimulated by the need for textual criticism with regard to the canonical translations transmitted, and by the need for continuous reference to Sanskrit grammatical literature among those who assimilated, to use Pieter Verhagen's term, its conceptual world into indigenous Tibetan scholarship. Let it suffice to remind you of the great fifth Dalai Lama Ṅag-dbaṅ blo-bzaṅ rgya-mtsho (A.D. 1617-1682) who, although not himself a particularly advanced Sanskritist[28], nevertheless had great interest in Sanskrit and strongly furthered such studies during his rule.

Inherent to the work of most of these specialists was the use of such Sanskrit manuscripts as were available in Tibetan monastic collections. An example is the text-critical method of the 18th century scholar Si-tu paṇ-chen Chos-kyi 'byuṅ-gnas (A.D. 1699?-1774) recently studied by Pieter Verhagen.[29] The Si-tu paṇ-chen worked with a great number of Sanskrit manuscripts, both old ones from Tibetan collections and new ones from Nepal. We are touchingly reminded of our own work when he says that he based his choice of variants, quoting from Verhagen's translation, "on a comparison of (an?) actual Indian manuscript(s?)

[26] Cf. Dimitrov 2002: 48-50

[27] Cf. Verhagen 2001a: 203-217

[28] Cf. Tucci 1957

[29] Verhagen 2001b

that had come to Tibet in earlier times, and some bilingual copies, along with numerous corrupt manuscripts from Svayambhū and Patan (in) Nepal."[30]

Such Sanskrit manuscripts, then, if we try to draw a picture of their fate, were used by the translators at various locations, and after completion of their work returned to the original owners, as a rule, monastic centres specialising very early in collecting such material. I assume these centres to be nearly the same places where Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana was able to locate manuscripts during his trips to Tibet in the thirties of the last century: primarily Sa-skya, Źa-lu Ri-phug, and Ṅor. Stray manuscripts, originally probably individually owned, made their way into other places of protection: to Kun-bde-liṅ in Lhasa, Thub-stan rnam-rgyal in rTa-nag, to sPos-khaṅ and Ne-ri ri-thog near Shigatse, or, to give a new example, to sBras-spuṅs where I was last year shown two manuscripts in the recently opened manuscript library of the fifth Dalai Lama.

In Sa-skya, the Sanskrit manuscripts were kept in the so-called Phyag-dpe lha-khaṅ ('Manuscript-Chapel'). Here I cannot resist from quoting Sāṅkṛtyāyana's vivid description of his first visit to these treasures at some length to give you an idea of their slumber in safety over the centuries:[31]

"The next day (the 25th May [of 1936]) we went to the Lha-khang-cchen-mo built by the hierarch Phags pa (1251-80 A.C.) the preceptor of the Chinese Emperor Kublai Khan. Before entering the 2nd courtyard, on the left side of the gate there is a big staircase of more than 50 steps, leading to the first floor. It is so steep that often the descent is terrifying.

After reaching the first floor when you turn towards the right you come across firstly an unassuming room, the front of which is made of coarse wooden planks. From its outward shape no one can suspect that it is a store-house of such precious volumes of Indian and Tibetan MMS. The red seal was broken and the archaic lock was opened. And the single panelled door was opened with a slight push and a cloud of dust arose. Our throats were choked with the thick dust and for a moment we could not see what was in the interior. The whole floor was covered with a thick layer of dust about one-third of an inch. We halted for a moment to let the dust subside. Then we saw in the three sides of the room (about 20' × 25') encircling rows of open racks, where volumes on volumes of

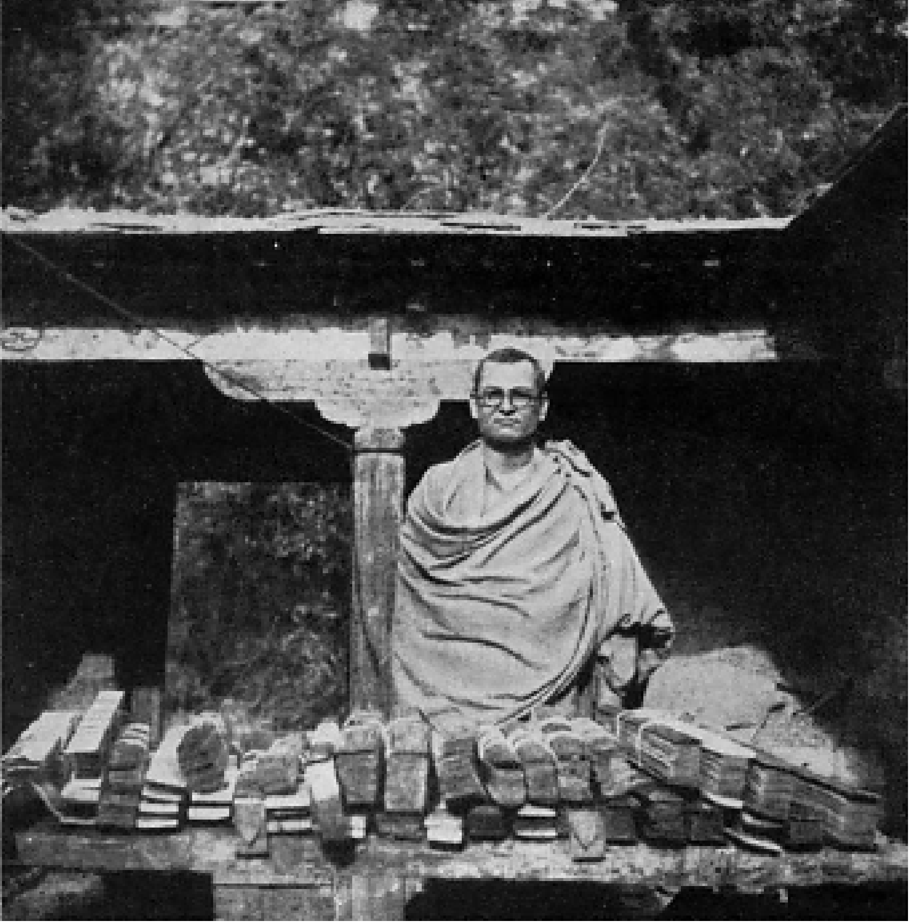
[30] *Loc. cit.*: 78

[31] SĀṄKṚTYĀYANA 1937: 4-6



Sa-skya, the terrifying staircase (foto Michael Henss 1994).

MMS. were kept. Most of these MMS. were wrapped in cloth. It did not take much time to find the place where palm-leaf MMS. were kept, thanks to their quaint size. Moreover the present custodians think it superfluous to spend a single penny to wrap them with cloth. In the middle of the left row I saw one palm-leaf MS. and then after more search I discovered 25 bundles of palm-leaf Sanskrit MMS. There was also one paper MS. of the Kālacakraṭīkā. ....



Palmleaf manuscripts being examined by Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana in Sa-skya (*JBORS* 1937).

On that day I had just a look at those palm-leaf bundles and it is beyond my power to describe my joy when I saw among those 25 volumes the MS. of the complete Pramāṇa-Vārttika-Bhāṣya, a portion of Dharmakīrti's own commentary on the first chapter of the P.V. and a complete sub-commentary on the same by Karṇakagomin, and also the Yogācārabhūmi ... .

Now there was no question of leaving Sa-skya soon. I took two bundles with me containing works relating to the Pramāṇa-Vārttika."

This introductory sketch should have made sufficiently clear that the Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibet not only have been property of different Tibetan monasteries before 1959 as they are now property of the state, the TAR Government, but that they are also an integral part of Tibetan cultural and intellectual history. They therefore constitute an important area of the academic discipline of Tibetan Studies, even if their contents form a part of Indology and Buddhist Studies. This fact of their multiple import is, however, also one of the roots of the present problem, namely scarcity of sufficient and sufficiently informed research staff to work on these materials. The crux of the matter is, that tibetologists, as a rule, are not also Sanskrit scholars, even in the West, and, with very rare exceptions, are never Sanskrit scholars in the modern PRC.

Thus, while it is a quite natural wish on the side of modern TAR and PRC research management to have the necessary capacity for research on their own heritage among their own people, it is difficult to see just how such capacity can be developed quickly to a degree that is appropriate to the dimension of the task. To some extent it surely must be attempted. But, given the scarcity of specialists even on a global scale, only a practical approach to solve the problem will promise reasonable results within a relatively short range of time. That practical solution is no other than international cooperation: The task to regain for the "memory of the world" greater parts of original literature from the most prolific period of Indian Buddhism simply demands the gathering of all available forces throughout the world to work together with Sanskritist in the PRC who need to specialise in these specific Tibetan sources and with tibetologists who need to receive sufficient education in Sanskrit.

* * *

We have now reached the 20th century. Favoured by the climatic conditions of the Tibetan highlands, by the settling of dust and the absence of termites,[32] the manuscripts seemed to have been waiting for this amazing person Kedārnāth Pandey alias Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana (1893-1963), to bring them to the world of learning once more. He went to Tibet four times, in 1929/30, 1934, 1936, and 1938. From the first trip he brought back Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs and only the rumour of Sanskrit manuscripts. But the next journeys were rich in harvest. Some manuscripts he copied, of most he took photos.[33] It is easy to see what made him search for Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibet in the first place. Nepal and its royal and private manuscript holdings had provided the major sources for the study of Buddhism, particularly Mahāyāna and tantric Mantrayāna Buddhism, during the 19th century. In the final years before World War I, the various European expeditions to Central Asia discovered numerous manuscripts and fragments mostly from the second half of the first millennium A.D. After his first trip to Tibet, Rāhula was set on 'restoring the Pramāṇa-Vārttika of Dharmakīrti' when he was told that the Nepalese pandit Hemarāj Śarman had discovered the work in original Sanskrit. I quote: "so I gave up the tasks and thought it prudent to see first those Sanskrit MMS. which were still preserved in Tibet, before taking any restoration work, lest it might prove an useless labour after the discovery of the original MMS."[34] Rāhula's success can hardly be underestimated. The results of his efforts, under the most difficult of circumstances, are now in the Bihar Research Society and copies in the Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute in Patna, and are quite easily available through copies made for the Seminar of Indian and Buddhist Studies in Göttingen.[35] Much of the progress in Buddhist studies achieved during the post-war 20th century is due to Sāṅkṛtyāyana's vision and labour. In particular, the study of the Buddhist epistemological tradition owes a number of first editions of huge and difficult texts of primary

[32] The Potala, however, seems to be an exception. Humidity is a problem, and there are rats (cf. China's Tibet 14/2, 2003, 29)

[33] Cf. Bandurski 1994: 12f. and 27

[34] Sāṅkṛtyāyana 1935:21. The pandit was accompanied by dGe-'dun Chos-'phel on some of his journeys. For the latter's memories and notes on manuscripts cf. dGe-'dun Chos-'phel 1986: 4-36.

[35] Cf. Bandurski 1994

importance to him. In fact, his unequalled diligence and editorial expertise have shaped the very basis of modern scholarship in this field. While new, critical editions are no doubt necessary, our admiration for this scholar's achievements will remain.

In the same period, Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984) photographed and had copied many Buddhist manuscripts during his expeditions since 1926 to the western Himalaya and Central Tibet, particularly those in 1933, 1935, 1939, and 1949. He visited the places also visited by Sāṅkṛtyāyana, Sa-skya, Ṅor, and Źa-lu, and many of his photos are of the same manuscripts. However, due to the fact that after the war Tucci's interest shifted in emphasis more and more to Tibetan studies properly speaking, his intention to work on these materials himself or have them edited by his pupils was only partly realized. The collection as such, now kept at the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente in Rome, was almost inaccessible until very recently. Tucci was by all means liberal with sharing his holdings with colleagues. But it was difficult to know what they consisted of. A survey of this collection in the IsIAO with a provisional list of works has only recently been provided by Francesco Sferra,[36] and, while it seems that parts of the original holdings have presently unknown whereabouts, most of these materials is certainly available by now.

After World War II Tucci was lucky to enter Tibet once more in 1949. During this visit he found two more palm-leaf manuscripts of the 8th or 9th centuries with poetical texts by two then still unknown authors. However, the subsequent global and regional political and social changes in general did not allow any further searching for Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibet by foreign scholars. After the arrival of Chinese forces in Lhasa in September 1951 no travel to Tibet was allowed by 'Westerners' other than selected journalists and those from the Communist Block. This restriction became even tighter after the 'Uprising' in 1959.

* * *

What happened to these manuscripts during the most tragic three or more years

[36] Cf. SFERRA 2000

of the 'Democratic Reform' period which started in March 1959, and after the 1959 'Uprising' and the flight of the Dalai Lama and other high lamas, when, as Tibetans remember *rnam sa la zher pa'i skyab* ("The sky fell to the earth"), is difficult to know, and even difficult to ask in weighing the value of cultural antiquities against human suffering. Specific documents, if they exist, are inaccessible – at least to me. The treatment of monastic properties can best be inferred from the twenty-four-year-old Panchen Lama's *70.000 Character Petition* of 1962,[37] a document compiled during inspection tours in Xinjiang, Qinghai, Southern China, and the area later to be known as the Tibet Autonomous Region. This document is related to events between 1959 and 1962, and was submitted only to China's most senior leaders at the time. The full document did not emerge before 1996. It speaks of the eradication of Buddhist statues, scriptures and stupas, the usage of the *Tripiṭaka* as material for fertilisers and shoemaking, and the confiscation of monastic property.[38]

The share of devastation and destruction caused by the "leftist deviation" in the later "Cultural Revolution" period which began in Tibet with the banning of the Monlam New Year's ceremonies in Lhasa in February 1966, and which is officially considered to have lasted until after Chairman Mao's death in 1976, must have also been considerable. Yet, it seems that the loss of Sanskrit manuscripts during this period was rather minimal, although the Cultural Revolution period is still officially acknowledged to be the main or only culprit, whereas the earlier catastrophe, which coincided with the great famine in China, has not been focused upon so far.

The meagre information I have been able to gather can now be summarized. As said before, this data must be considered to be incomplete as well as uncertain. Historians of a later time and more experience than mine will surely be able to improve on it. However, this is what I know for the moment:

- In 1959 the manuscripts from Shalu (Źa-lu) were already brought to the Potala.
- In 1961 a collection of ca 250 manuscripts was sent to the library of the Palace

[37] Tibet Information Network 1997. For the text and its authenticity cf. Barnett 1997, for a historical evaluation cf. Norbu 1997 and Shakya 1999: 262-275

[38] Tibet Information Network 1997: 50f. and Shakya 1999: 266

of National Minorities (Zhongguo Minzu Tushuguan) in Beijing as a loan from the "Tibetan Government". It is unclear which governmental authority of these years was in charge of such matters. The traditional Tibetan Government, which had been allowed to remain in office even after the Chinese forces arrived in 1951, had been abolished in 1959. Its functions were exercised by the Preparatory Committee for the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region (PCTAR). Power rested with the newly-established People's Liberation Army Military Control Committee. To quote from the *White Paper "The Development of Tibetan Culture"* released by the Chinese Information Service in 2000: 'As early as in June 1959, the Tibet Cultural Relics, Historical Sites, Documents and Archives Management Committee was established to collect and protect a large number of cultural relics, archives, and ancient books and records. At the same time, the central people's government assigned work teams to Lhasa, Xigaze and Shannan to conduct on-the-spot investigations of major cultural relics.'[39] In 1965, this Management Committee, was followed by the Cultural Relics Administration Committee set up by the new Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

- From 1962 onwards, under provisions of the PCTAR, the Management Committee seems to have ordered all manuscripts in possession of the monasteries, with the exception of the big ones around Lhasa and of Sakya, to be gathered in Lhasa, most being brought to the Potala and fewer to Norbulingka, and some also to the TAR Archives newly founded in 1984[40]. They can thus be considered as having been saved from the later ravages of the Red Guards. For then the Potala was under protection as it served as military headquarters.
- Nothing more is heard until after 1976. In 1982 the PRC Foreign Office was asked by the Indian Foreign Office for a report on the Sanskrit manuscripts. The government was at a loss.
- In 1983 Dorje Cedan/Tseten, one of the most senior Tibetan cadres, protégé of Hu Yaobang since the latter's visit to Lhasa in 1980, Chairman of the TAR from April 1983 to 1985 and Deputy Party Secretary of TAR from March 1983 to June 1985, as well as in charge of founding the new Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences, took an interest in the matter. He commissioned Luo Zhao, a young

[39] *White Paper* § 11

[40] *White Paper* § 11, last part

scholar of Ch'an Buddhism and Chinese Buddhist logic, to prepare a list of these manuscripts.

▪ From September 1983 to July 1985, Luo Zhao worked in Tibet. He was given a contract by the Tibetan Government to prepare a list of all mss for the government which was not to be published. By January 1984, after visits to Tsethang and Sakya, he had produced a description of the mss in Norbulingka which he reported to Beijing. Dorje Cedan approved of the report and it was published in September 1985 in the CCP journal (unseen!). Subsequently Luo Zhao worked in the Potala from April 1984 to June 1985.

> Luo Zhao, *1943, studied history at Beijing University until 1968, followed by ten years in the woods. As post-graduate after 1978 he was a colleague of Wang Sen and a pupil of Ren Jiyu.

▪ The Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences sent its report to the CCP Central Committee on October 21, 1985. It proposed the foundation of a research institute in Lhasa, training of staff, composition of three to five books on the manuscripts to be written in cooperation between Tibetan and Han specialists, and the idea to make selected materials available to Indian scholars. These propositions were approved by Hu Qiaomu who was responsible for science in the Standing Committee of China's Central Advisory Committee.

However, nothing came of this proposal. Major changes in the Tibetan Government in 1985 seemed to have blocked further progress. Dorje Cedan left Lhasa in 1986 to become the first director of the new national Tibet Research Centre in Beijing, now called China Tibetology Research Centre (CTRC). The institute that had been intended for Lhasa was founded in Beijing, and one of the major topics of research defined in Dorje Cedan's presentation was "Research on Patra-Leaf Scripture Found in Lhasa".[41]

[41] Cf. SØRENSEN 1990: 116f. where he quotes from RDO-RJE TSHE-BRTAN (DORJE CEDAN) 1988: 19

- In the summer of 1987 the manuscripts in Lhasa listed by Luo Zhao earlier were photographed on orders from Dorje Cedan. Xerox copies of these photos are now at the CTRC.[42] And Luo Zhao's activities in this regard end here.
- In 1993, under Hu Jintao, TAR Party Secretary from 1988 to 1992, and by this time already in a senior leadership position in Beijing, the mss collection in the Palace of National Minorities in Beijing was returned to Tibet except for three mss kept in the Palace library as specimens. This collection is now in Lhasa's new Tibet Museum.
- To my last enquiries in November, 2002 I was told that the other collections still remain in their last places: the Potala, Norbulingka,[43] Drepung, Sakya, Tsethang, and possibly in the Lhasa Archives, the few mss in Tsethang being hopefully safe in the heavy sheet-metal chest that I paid for in 1994.

* * *

After World War II, outside of the PRC, scholars mainly concentrated on digesting the fruits of Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana's efforts. His materials and editions caused a veritable leap forward during the second half of the last century in our knowledge of various traditions of Indian Buddhism, particularly in regard to Buddhist epistemology. Thus, it was only after the end of the "Cultural Revolution" that some among us slowly began to think again of possibilities to gain access to the original literary heritage assumed to still exist in Tibet of which Sāṅkṛtyāyana's finds had given a tantalising taste. A survey of the more important subsequent enterprises can also serve to indicate the scholarly nucleus available today for international cooperation. Together these attempts successfully have

[42] Films and copies are said to be also in Lhasa, but this has not been confirmed to me in Lhasa so far. It also seems to be the case that Luo Zhao was not given all manuscripts in the collections for preparing his lists. In any case we have to assume that neither his lists nor the later films and copies are comprehensively covering the whole extent material

[43] At least one manuscripts from this collection has been seen, however, by a Japanese colleague in the Tibet Museum when he visited in 2001

managed to create an awareness for the need of action in Lhasa and Beijing, as well as for the necessity of some sort of cooperation.

In most cases, individual scholars from outside China, sometimes backed by their universities or national research organizations, attempted to be allowed access. To date none of them has managed to establish official links with any of the mss administrating institutions in the PRC through which regular academic access to these collections could be secured. Individual Chinese scholars must also be mentioned, such as Prof. Zhang Baosheng, a student of Prof. Ji Xianlin, who published the **Sādhanaśataka* facsimile in 1994 in Vienna, and the late Prof. Jiang Zhongxin (Chiang Chung-hsin), who evidently was not only allowed to publish certain manuscripts in facsimile in the early 1990ies, but even to bring specimens to the West, such as the *Madhyamakahṛdaya* manuscript, then kept in Beijing, to Copenhagen during his stay there in 1987 on the invitation of Dr. Christian Lindtner.

An exception is Taishō University, Tokyo, which, under its president Matsunami Yoshiro, was able to cooperate with the Library in the Palace of National Minorities, Beijing, in publishing facsimile editions of selected manuscripts from its collection "on loan". The first one was the *Śrāvakabhūmi* ms published in 1994. Matsunami's achievements are particularly valuable. He was not only able to continue this enterprise, and in 2001 even published a *Collection of Sanskrit Palm-leaf Manuscripts in Tibetan* dBu med *Script* on the basis of a contract with the Cultural Relics Administration Committee of the TAR Government, but within the Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism of Taishō University has also established different study groups who work under the guidance of Prof. Hisao Takahashi on the palaeography of these mss, prepare transliterated and critical editions of high quality and Japanese translations of the texts received. The efforts of Taishō University have been rewarded 1999 by Prof. Takahashi's discovery of the Sanskrit original of the *Vimalakīrtinivdeśa* in the Potala collection. The only definite drawback to these Japanese facsimile editions that must be mentioned is their prohibitive price which errects a different kind of accessibility barrier. Nevertheless, these working teams gathered at Taishō University are by now, aside from the small team in Vienna, the only major group of scholars well-experienced in this regard, and can be expected to contribute in the future considerably to the publication and the study of these texts.

Between 1991 and 1993, Prof. Johannes Bronkhorst and Prof. Tom J. F. Tille-

mans, from the University of Lausanne, discussed the issue of these Sanskrit manuscripts with most of the officials responsible at that time in Beijing and Lhasa, as well as with the few informed scholars. The enquiries shed some light on the complexities of the issue, but no activity resulted directly from their efforts. This move of the Swiss scholars was further strongly assisted from the Norwegian side through the agreements realised by Prof. Jens Braarvig, University of Oslo, who in 1993 to 1995 lead missions to establish the successful University Cooperation Tibet-Norway which is in existence since 1994.

A rough survey of my own modest efforts which have recently been characterized by a good friend as "ghostly" can now be added. In these efforts I was guided by the very same four principles which Lhagpa Phuntshogs, the present director of the China Tibetology Research Centre, summarized for future cooperations on these matters at the conclusion of our last meeting in September this year: sincerity, consolidation, precaution, belief. Sincerity in the scholarly and cultural intentions, consolidation in the form of officially acknowledged cooperations, precaution in taking the right paths at the right times, and belief in the value for all mankind.

In 1981, when I convened the Csoma de Kőrös Tibetological Conference in Vienna, Prof. Wang Yao was the first tibetologist from the PRC to be allowed to attend a conference in the West. Subsequently he was a guest professor at Vienna University twice. From him I learned about the intricacies of the scholarly and institutional life in the PRC of the eighties. I would like to take this occasion to acknowledge my sincere gratitude to him in the stead of so many others who later continued to help me to understand what was going on and what had happened, and, what is more, what did not happen, and why not.

In 1984 I was lucky to be taken along to Beijing with a delegation of the Austrian Academy of Sciences to sign its agreement with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. I took the occasion to present to the Chinese Academy a *Memorandum concerning Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts from Tibetan monasteries - historical background and proposals for research.* During this visit I also met Prof. Wang Sen at the Central Institute for National Minorities. He was China's leading scholar in the Buddhist epistemological tradition, and at this time already terminally ill, but attended the official meeting nevertheless, during which he whispered to me. It was then that I heard that Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya* had just been found in the Potala. Only this spring did I realise that this news must have been con-

tained in the letter written to Wang Sen by Luo Zhao from Lhasa just some days before our meeting.

In the following years I used every occasion of contact with officials and scholars from all over the PRC to explain the historical background, and my ideas on what should be done. All tibetological delegations sent to Europe since 1996 have also had to listen to this when visiting Vienna.

In the late eighties and early nineties, when other scholars in Europe began to establish their own contacts, we kept aligning our separate approaches. Together with Bronkhorst and Schmithausen I even signed a letter addressed to the Cultural Relics Administration in Lhasa in 1991. We received no answer.

In 1994, in preparation of an agreement between the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences, I visited Lhasa, met open interest and received valuable information on the state of the manuscripts in Tibet, and was even allowed to see some of the manuscripts in the Norbulingka.

In 1996, together with Jens Braarvig, I sent another memorandum entitled *On initiating a joint project for preservation of and research on Sanskrit Palm Leaf Manuscripts in Tibet*[44] to Lhasa and Tibet. Again we received no answer. The same year, via the Austrian UNESCO office, I probed the interest of the UNESCO "Memory of the World" programme in a project "Sanskrit Manuscripts in Tibet". Again no answer.

However, the memorandum sent with Braarvig seems to have had some effect in Lhasa. In the spring of 1998, the Tibetan Academy together with the Cultural Relics Administration and the TAR Office for Foreign Cultural Exchange presented an application to the TAR Government on much the same lines as contained in our memorandum. When I was in Lhasa in 1999, director Dotar/Dutai of the TAR Foreign Cultural Exchange office, was hoping to have a green light soon. But, sadly, he passed away before the end of the year, and this project unfolded no further. Yet while, particularly after a frustrating trip to Sakya, I was tempted to leave further efforts to younger colleagues at this time, the talks to friends and some officials in Lhasa clearly showed that considerable progress in information, awareness and willingness had been made.

Still, it was not until November, 2002 that a substantial break-through was achieved.

[44] Cf. Appendix

In June, 2002 the Academic Committee of the China Tibetology Research Centre (CTRC) invited a group of overseas scholars in Tibetan Studies to Beijing with the purpose of promoting scholarly exchange. Since Prof. Lhagpa Phuntshogs had succeeded Dorje Cedan in 2000 as director-general of this Research Center, my hopes for being able to promote the by then twenty-year-old enterprise had risen somewhat.

> Lhagpa Phuntshogs (*1942) had been president of the TASS from 1983-1991, and secretary-general of the Research Association for the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau from 1991-2000. I first met him in 1987 at the Csoma de Kőrös Conference in Sopron, Hungary, and remembered good and open talks.

At the first meeting, November 14, 2002, I raised the topic of the Sanskrit manuscripts and caught the interest of the CTRC representatives present. We discussed the issues of the lack of experts in the PRC, of the absence of cooperations of the CTRC even with the Sanskrit scholars within the PRC, particularly at Beijing University and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and of the need for international cooperation to fulfil one of the six major research projects mentioned at the very foundation of their institution back in the late eighties. Finally, together with Lhagpa Phuntshogs, we tried to pin down the main cause still impeding any progress in this regard. The answer we found for the question of the still remaining major obstacle was simple: an unnecessarily wide application of the "Law on the Protection of Cultural Objects".

This law, which was accepted in an amended form by the 13th congregation of the Standing Committee of the 19th National People's Congress on October 28, 2003, regulates the protection of immovable and movable 'cultural objects' (*wen-wu*)[45] and, thus, also concerns valuable documents and manuscripts (*wen-xian*). The law, although emphasizing the need for research on these objects (Chapter IV, § 40), does not allow research on objects in official collections for which there is as yet no inventory (Chapter IV, § 42). What we then found in addition, was that in talking about scholarly work on the 'palm-leaf manuscripts', the '*tale loma*', no clear distinction had been made so far between the concrete material of the palm-leaf manuscripts themselves as 'cultural objects' (*wen-wu*), i.e. the material objects that have to be protected and preserved as such and that

[45] See p. 34.

are still in need of being taken stock of, and the 'contents' (*nei-rong*) of these manuscripts, the 'information' (*hsin-hsi*) contained that has to be made available by means of copies and scholarly editions in order to be studied.

This down-to-earth analysis formed a veritable meeting of minds, and remained the basis of all further developments. In consequence, all cooperation will be referring, for the time being, not to the palm-leaf manuscripts themselves, but only to the copies made from the photos taken in the eighties and now available in the collections of the CTRC. Before the last Conference of the International Association for Tibetan Studies at Oxford, early September, 2003, we exchanged drafts of an agreement between the CTRC and the Austrian Academy of Sciences (AAS). At the conference, Lhagpa Phuntshogs already referred to a future cooperation, and in Vienna, after the conference, we met again and worked together on a final text. This agreement will be signed, we hope, early next year. It is meant to be valid for three years as a first step in what we think of as being a carefully guided step-by-step process.[46]

This agreement will primarily provide 1. access to copies of the Sanskrit manuscripts in the CTRC, Beijing, 2. joint editorial and research work on selected texts from these copies, 3. joint publication by the CTRC publishing house and the AAS press of a series to be called "Sanskrit Texts from the TAR", and 4. the possibility of incorporating into this agreement the work on such texts by scholars associated with the AAS' institute in Vienna, even if they are already working on the basis of copies unofficially received through whatever channels during the last years. Sub-agreements will accompany every step of this cooperation, and it remains to be seen, how durable and how practicable the first arrangements will be. And not a minor point in all this will be how the Austrian Science Fund will react to my new inroads on its budget. In any case, I hope this agreement will mean that the texts contained in the legacy of Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibet will slowly become accessible to the world again, for otherwise this heritage would be nothing but dead matter and of no value to anybody.

A descriptive catalogue of the copies available at the CTRC, in my opinion, has to be one of the first tasks. First publications in the new series will consist of diplomatic and critical editions of the first chapter of Jinendrabuddhi's *Pramāṇasa-*

[46] The agreement was signed January 9th, 2004

muccayaṭīkā prepared in Vienna and of editions of the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra* prepared by the late Prof. Jiang Zhongxin.

At the same time, in Vienna, I am planning to create a list of the texts and manuscripts in form of a relational data-bank to be placed on the internet in order to provide global scholarly access for enriching and correcting the information.

Finally: Since it is very clear that no critical editorial work can be considered finished without the possibility to inspect the original at least once, in the long run it will be necessary to convince the TAR authorities of the need for making scans of the manuscripts themselves for them to be subsequently available on the internet. For such a future project we already have a clear and well-established precedent: In 2000, the British Library already signed a "memorandum of understanding" with the National Library of China concerning the International Dunhuang Project. This memorandum regulates the availability of images digitised from the National Library's collection of Tibetan documents from Dunhuang. Thus it may be not unreasonable to hope also for the Sanskrit manuscripts from the TAR that they will be seen by future scholars world-wide in the internet. Moreover, this hope is not totally unrealistic. The latest news have it, that in accordance with the new law mentioned and on behalf of the TAR Government the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences is presently launching a project to create an inventory of the huge collection of Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs in the temple of Sakya.[47] Since the existence of respective inventories is the main condition for any move, exhibit or external study of such objects, this means, as a precedent, that with regard to the TAR Sanskrit mss collections at least one major implementation of the new law is already under way.[48]

If, as can be assumed, the Sanskrit manuscripts photographed and therefore

[47] Cf. *The Buddhist Heritage* 1/1, 2004: 13

[48] That this whole matter is developing may further be concluded from the most recent report of *XINHUA online* "Tibet protects rare ancient Buddhist scriptures" (www.xinhuanet.com/english/2004-04/16/content_1424303.htm). It is said that "the Tibet Autonomous Region has worked out a plan to beef up the protection of rare Buddhist scriptures written on pattra leaves and a leading group will be formed to coordinate efforts in this regard." and that an official of the Tibet Regional Cultural Relics Bureau assesses the number of "pattra-leaf scriptures" as approximately 1000.

available through copies in the CTRC are only a part of the manuscripts extant in the TAR collections, the description of the CTRC holdings will be at least a helpful first step towards a complete description of the Sanskrit manuscripts in the TAR. Eventually, and probably best in the process of preparing the scans, the manuscripts not yet identified will have to be described as well.

At the moment it may then not be premature to sum up by stating that in all probability the present and the next generation of Buddhist scholars will be able step by step to study this great and exciting corpus of the Sanskrit manuscripts from Tibet, one of the last 'hidden' treasures of Asia, and incorporate it finally into the intellectual and spiritual history of mankind.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	Austrian Academy of Sciences
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CTRC	China Tibetology Research Center
ISIAO	Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente
PRC	Peoples' Republic of China
TAR	Tibet Autonomous Region
TASS	Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences

CHINESE WORDS

wen-wu	文物
wen-xian	文獻
nei-rong	内容
hsin-hsi	信息

The Cultural Office
Tibetan Autonomous Region

Center for Tibetan Studies
Beijing

On initiating a joint project for preservation of and research on Sanskrit Palm Leaf Manuscripts in Tibet.

After the constructive discussions during our visits in the P.R. China, time seems appropriate to start talks on a joint project for preserving, studying, and making available the precious Sanskrit manuscripts which have been kept in Tibet for many centuries. These manuscripts are one of the greatest cultural treasures of the world and their preservation with the best modern techniques, as well as making them accessible to the scholarly community are two tasks of utmost importance which would constitute an invaluable contribution to international cooperation in the area of humanities. While these manuscripts are, and must remain, the property of Tibet, their spiritual and cultural meaning is of import to all mankind. The following points are presented as a proposal for initiating a programme to accomplish these aims.

The manuscripts are presently kept safely in traditional ways in several collections of the T.A.R., while an unknown part of the manuscripts already has been filmed. However, any kind of accessibility and research would presuppose the implementation of the best modern conservational and organizational standards. At the same time we have to be aware of the fact that all over the world there are only very few specialists who are able to do the necessary work of editing and/or translating these texts according to modern editing standards. Neither in the P.R. China, nor outside are these specialists available in numbers that would correspond to the great volume of this treasure. The appropriate training of young scholars from the P.R. China, and the education of talented students is, therefore, a necessary part of this programme.

Such a programme should include:

A. PRESERVATION:

1. A survey, cataloguing and the proper preservation of the original manuscripts in suitable buildings.
2. Filming the manuscripts on to microfilm, microfiche or other suitable media.
3. Education of a staff to continue this preservation work.

The originals of the texts should be kept in their original institutions or at other suitable locations in Tibet. Microfilms should be kept in Lhasa and Beijing in suitable research institutions with appropriate tools for duplication to be made for research institutions internationally.

B. EDUCATION:

A reasonable number of Tibetan, Chinese and Western researchers and students should be educated in Sanskrit and Buddhist philologies with a view to being able to edit and translate these texts. This education should be realized in two steps: at present, active researchers in the P.R. China who are interested and willing to receive the appropriate training should be

selected and sent to European, American, or Japanese institutions to receive such training. At the same time, with a view to creating a future generation of such researchers, fellowships for students should be organized in order to develop a body of researchers educated in Sanskrit and Buddhist philologies.

Beside the study of Sanskrit and Buddhist philology, this education should also encompass palaeography, as well as the methodology of textual criticism. It will be necessary to ensure that these researchers and students will receive the best possible special education and that this work is supervised by the best experts in the field.

C. RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION:

Later, as a basis for the active cooperation of the specialists on these texts, a research institute in Lhasa should be established beside the already existing research institute in Beijing. A set of microfilms should be available there as the basis of their work. Finally, a series should be established for the editions (critical and in facsimile) and translations resulting from the work at those institutes. This series should also be subject to the very best scientific supervision.

These three phases of the programme should take place concurrently to ensure the greatest possible progress of the programme.

First steps:
Establishing a board of representatives of the involved parties for the programme should be the first item to be realized. This board should be responsible for making and accomplishing the policies of the programme, and should take care of funding as well as take responsibility for a reasonable progress of the programme. The board should also ensure that the results of the programme will be available to the academic world as well as the public in general in accordance with traditional academic standards.

As a first step, however, we propose a meeting of representatives from the institutions responsible in the P.R. China for these manuscripts in Lhasa and Beijing, with the two undersigned, all representatives representing their institutions and having the support of their institutions. This meeting should work out a detailed time-plan and a plan for funding the programme, and should make a proposal for an agreement to be signed by the institutions to be involved. At this meeting the issue will have to be discussed which institutions will be necessary for promoting and operating such a programme.

The undersigned wish to express their sincere hope that a common endeavour may result in the common satisfaction of all parties involved in the programme, and ultimately, that the programme may successfully ensure the safeguarding, as well as the availability of this great literary treasure. They would greatly appreciate your response to this letter, and your views on how and where such a meeting should take place in order to accomplish this first step towards initiating a common project. We indeed feel, as being seriously committed to the ideas proposed, that it is now the right time to embark upon this great enterprise.

Yours sincerely

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关于保存和研究西藏梵文贝叶经的合作计划

在中国访问期间的建设性磋商之后，似乎已经到了具体讨论保存、研究和出版在西藏保存了几个世纪的珍贵的梵文写本的时候了。这些写本是最了不起的世界文化遗产之一。将它们公诸于知识界和用最好的现代技术来保护它们是给人文学领域的国际合作做出宝贵贡献的两件极端重要的事情。这些写本是，而且必将继续是西藏的财富，但是，它们对整个人类具有精神和文化的重要意义。下面是为了实现这些目标而实施一个项目的几点建议。

目前，这些写本用传统的方式将保险地保存在西藏自治区的几个收藏群里，其中一个未知的部分已经拍成缩微胶卷。不管怎样，任何形式的公诸于世和研究均应以最现代化的保护和组织水平为先决条件。同时，我们不得不面对的事实是，目前全世界也只有很少的几个专家能够以现代化的校定水平进行校定和翻译这些文献所必需要的工作。中国及其以外的屈指可数的几个专家与这个文献可观的部数是不相称的。因而，培训来自中国的青年学者和培养一些聪颖的学生是这个项目的一个必要的组成部分。这个项目将包括：

一、保存

1. 普查，编目及在合适的房子里保存原本。
2. 将写本拍成缩微照片、缩微胶片或其它形式。
3. 培养继续保存这些文献的专业技术人员。

这些写本的原件应该保存在它们的原保存点或者在西藏更合适的其它保存点。它们的缩微胶片应该保存在拉萨和北京市的合适单位，并以一定的手段让国际上的研究单位能得到复印副本。

二、适当数量的藏族、汉族和西方的研究人员及学生必须受到梵文和佛教语文学的培训，使他们能够校定和翻译这些卷子。这个培训可以用两个步骤来实现：目前可以派对其感兴趣并愿意接受培训的中国现有研究人员到欧洲、美国和日本的学术机构去接受培训。同时，为了在下一代中产生这方面的研究人员和扩大现有研究人员的队伍，一部分大学生必须受到梵文和佛教语文学的教育。

除了学习梵文和佛教语文学以外，还要受到有关古文字学和文献校勘方法论的教育。必须做到的是，这些研究人员和学生要在这个领域中最好的专家的指导下受到尽可能最好的专业教育。

三、研究和出版

然后，作为专业人员们就这些文献进行合作的组成部分，除了北京已有的研究单位以外，在拉萨成立一个研究单位，一套缩微胶片必须作为他们可用的材料留在那里。最后从这些部门的研究工作形成并出版一套编辑本（精校本与影印本）和翻译本。这套丛书的形成必须受到非常好的科学的指导。

校勘精校本与影印本以上三个方面最好能同时进行，以确保这个项目尽可能最好的进展。

第一步：成立一个以参加这个项目的所有单位的代表组成的委员会将是要实施的第一步。这个委员会将负责制定和实施项目的宗旨，负责项目的进展和注意节约经费。除了面对具有传统的文科水平的一般读者之外，委员会还要保证它的出版物成为对学术界有价值的成果。

总之，作为第一步，我们〔署名者〕建议由在中国的拉萨和北京对这些写本负有责任的单位代表和我们举行一次会议，所有代表将全权代表自己的单位。这个会议要制定出一个详细的时间表和项目的经费计划，以产生一个将由所有参加单位签字的协议书的草本。在这个会议上必须讨论的问题还有，将需要哪些单位来协助和实施这个项目。

我们真诚地希望所有参加这个项目的成员们的共同努力将带来一个令人满意的结局。最终，这个项目不仅要将这个珍贵的文字财富公诸于世，而且要成功地保护它。我们将非常高兴地欣赏您的回信和实施这个共同项

目的第一步的会议已将怎么样和在哪里举行的意见。我们确实感觉到，自从我们认真地承诺这个建议起，已经到了具体开始这个伟大事业的时候了。

真诚的

恩斯特·鲁泰图凯尔纳　　　　英斯·布拉姆特